May 1, 1981

TO: All Districts and Clubs

FROM: National Organization-Education Department

RE: Club Educational Outline on Youth and Building the YWLL

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The enclosed club education outline on "Youth and Building the YWLL" is aimed at helping clubs in their discussions on the Party's attitude towards youth, and towards the fraternal Marxist-Leninist-led youth organization, the YWLL. Such discussions should be held now in preparation for the YWLL's 5th National Convention which will be held in New York City from June 26 - 29, at Columbia University.

We hope that this outline and club discussions will help in advancing the kind of work that will insure that your district will send a significant, spirited delegation of youth to the YWLL convention and help build a stronger League in your area, or establish the League in your area if there is none now.

The outline is divided into two parts. The Introduction is designed to help the discussion leader make a 20-minute opening presentation. The discussion leader should also consider utilizing the recommended reading in preparing the opening presentation. The two discussion questions should be discussed thoroughly, at least 15 minutes for each question. It is important to encourage all comrades to participate in the discussion, drawing from their experiences, raising whatever pertinent questions they have, etc. The club, and in particular the discussion leader, should feel free to modify the Introduction and discussion questions in order to take into account local conditions, the particular make-up of the club and so on.

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Club Education Outline on Youth and Building the YWLL

Introduction

In its desperate battle to overcome the forces of peace, national liberation, democracy and above all socialism, which are growing and more cohesive with every passing day, capitalism is stepping up its efforts ideologically to sidetrack masses from the correct path. It makes special efforts in winning over youth.

Indeed, it tries to project an image of capitalism as a "youthful" society. Whether it be through the constant barrage of jeans commercials, and its crass use of children and teenagers to promote its wares, or through the constant media coverage of the most intimate aspects of the lives of rock stars, youthful movie personalities and athletes, capitalism pushes the false image of a society where youth can "make it."

In this period of intensifying economic hardships much publicity is given to young executives who have made it in the business world. Every year lists of new millionaires and especially the young "innovative" ones are published. All this is to continue the capitalist myth that anyone can be successful if they only try hard enough.

But the reality is quite different.

Under capitalism youth face not only the "ordinary" aspects of exploitation and oppression which capitalism subjects the great majority of the people to; they also face a special oppression as youth, an oppression rooted in the exploitative class nature of the system.

Ed/-Youth

Youth is a special period in life. The period known as youth is a period of transition from dependent childhood to independent adulthood. Youth is a period when the values and outlook of people are shaped. Youth is a period of intense physical, social and spiritual awakening. Social life, relations with the opposite sex, and thoughts and plans for marriage and family life are important concerns of young people.

The main feature of this transition period is the defining of the young person's position in the economic structure of society. What class, what occupation and income are basically determined in this period, although it is greatly influenced by the class position of the parents. Education is an important aspect of this period; both in an economic sense, as well as in the formation of young people's values, ideas and outlook.

It is clear from the basic essence of this period in life that the rights to earn and to learn are the very foundations, along with the right to live in peace, for the successful and healthy development of youth.

From all this we can conclude that while there is clearly an age factor involved in the question of youth, the essence of this period in life is not simply one of age. Rather historically we see variations in the period known as youth, determined mainly by the level of socio-economic development of a society. In different societies the age period in which individuals make the transition from dependent childhood to independent adulthood varies. For example, in slave and feudal societies it was at an earlier age than in monopoly capitalist U.S.A.

While it is true that this is a most complex and possibly difficult period of l fe under any society, a period characterized by great physical, psychological and philosophical changes in an individual's life, the nature of the socio-economic system in which an individual lives has a decisive impact on the difficulties encountered in this period and the outcome of it.

Capitalism, which succeeded feudalism, on the one hand destroyed the static nature of feudalism, in which a young person invariably followed in the footsteps of his or her father or mother--if you were the son of a serf, you would very likely be a serf, etc. On the other hand, it brought about greater instability to the lives of young people. Since capitalism does not eliminate exploitation but merely changes its form, in a basic sense, what it accomplished in relation to youth was to cut youth adrift to fend for themselves, without any assured place in the economics of the capitalist marketplace. The class and social background of a young person, his or her parents' status, under capitalism still has a major impact on the future position that a young person will occupy in the economic structure of society, although not to the same degree as under feudalism.

Under capitalism all youth face certain common problems and concerns by virtue of being young. All youth, regardless of class backgrounds, have a need for a decent education, cultural and recreational opportunities, and occupational and career opportunities. They are all affected by wars, since youth are called upon to fight in them, and in general make the greatest sacrifices.

However, not all youth are affected to the same degree, nor is every problem a common problem. While youth is a social category cutting across class lines, it is at the same time connected to and fundamentally influenced by the basic division and struggle in capitalist society between the working class and the capitalist class. Therefore youth from working class backgrounds face the most severe problems and among them the youth from the nationally and racially oppressed peoples are hardest hit. Afro-American youth, as well as Chicano, Puerto Rican, Native American Indian and Asian and Pacific youth regardless of class backgrounds also face the problems of national and racial oppression. Young women, especially young working class women, are also victims of male supremacist ideology and practices, emanating from the ruling class.

Monopoly capitalism with its inherent drive towards economic and political subjugation of other peoples, and the super-exploitation of workers abroad, and consequently towards the militarization of society, and towards war, sharpens immensely the problems confronted by youth.

Presently, reflecting the acute nature of its general crisis, monopoly capital can not ensure jobs or job security to millions of youth. Black youth, and other nationally and racially oppressed youth, suffer from genocidal levels of unemployment; indeed, without profound radical changes that would loosen the stranglehold of monopoly upon the economy and government policy, and eventually help in the complete elimination of monopoly rule, there is no future for these youth. With the oncoming "chips and robots" revolution, and capitalism's tendency to utilize technological and scientific developments at the expense of the working class, the crisis of youth unemployment will tend to sharpen even more.

Developments since our last National Convention serve to underline Comrade Gus Hall's remarks in the Main Political Report (Labor Up-Front) that "Our Youth are being squeezed between high unemployment and runaway inflation. They are experiencing the highest non-cyclical unemployment rate in history. For the first time, a majority of Afro-American youth are the victims of a lifetime of racist unemployment."

The Reagan-directed monopoly attack on the working class and people of the United States does not spare youth at all. In fact, it can be called the most vicious, cruel attack on children and youth ever in the history of our country. It is a wholesale slaughter of programs benefitting youth in the areas of public and higher education, jobs and job-training, health, cultural and recreational programs, etc. At the same time it raises to a much higher lever the danger of war.

The Reagan administration, more openly and aggressively pursuing the anti-youth and anti-labor policies of its predecessor, through its sub-minimum wage for youth policy, is trying to utilize the unemployment problem in order to achieve maximum profits for the monopolies, and at the same time to divide the working class.

Clearly the young generation has a great stake in defeating the Reagan monopoly policies. Moreover, these policies cannot be defeated without the participation of the young generation in a mighty coalition led by labor.

In general, the youth are a key component of the labor-led, anti-monopoly coalition which our Party is working to achieve. That is why we work to build democratic youth unity, which is the expression of the anti-monopoly strategy among youth and which strengthens and stimulates the overall anti-monopoly movement. Democratic youth unity aims to unite all sectors of youth under the leadership of working class youth, for the basic economic, social and political needs of youth and against the main obstacle to these demands - monopoly capital.

Young workers as the most decisive element within the young generation, also play an indispensable role in building unity between the labor movement and the youth movement. The role of young workers in the labor movement has grown qualitatively in the last decade. They make up over 20 million members of the entire labor force.

Young workers face special problems and have special concerns. Capitalism constantly tries to use them as a source of extra profits and use their lack of seniority, inexperience and often lack of union protection as a weapon against the working class as a whole and the trade union movement in particular. Young workers also have special educational, recreational, cultural and social needs which are not being provided by society. These are areas which the trade union movement, progressive workers in the first place, should provide answers to so as to further consolidate young workers to its side.

Discussion Question #1 - What is the role of the Young Workers Liberation League? Why does the Party support the building of the YWLL? Why shouldn't the Party simply attempt to bring youth directly to its own ranks by working directly with the youth without the need to build the League?

The discussion and the discussion leader, in summarizing, should emphasize the following points:

1. Youth need their own organizations reflecting their concerns, interests and style. That is why youth clubs for recreational, cultural and social pursuits exists; but also there are church youth groups, youth groups of different political parties and organizations, such as the Young Democrats and the NAACP youth division; there are youth caucuses in different organizations, high school and college youth groups, etc. This is an objective reality although the political and philosophical ideas of the various youth groups vary, their structure varies,

their links to adult organizations vary, etc. The important thing to keep in mind is that the conditions facing and shaping youth give rise to youth organizations.

2. Taking the above into account and realizing the need to win the youth over to the cause of social progress and socialist revolution, Lenin wrote: "The middle-aged and the aged often do not know how to approach the youth, for the youth must of necessity advance to socialism in a different way, by other paths, in other forms, in other circumstances than their fathers. Incidentally, that is why we must decidedly favor the organizational independence of the youth league, not only because the opportunists fear such independence, but because of the very nature of the case; for unless they have complete independence, the youth will be unable either to train good socialists from their midst or prepare themselves to lead socialism forward." (Collected Works, Vol. 23, p.164). Note that Lenin referred to organizational independence. Clearly he was not speaking of ideological and political independence, since he notes the need to train good socialists, (not opportunists, or liberals, or whatever). The Party supports the League's organizational independence, while influencing its ideological and political development.

3. The YWLL is an independent youth organization with fraternal ties to the Communist Party, on the basis of a common affinity towards the science of Marxism-Leninism, which guides the principles, policies and actions of both organizations; although the Party applies the science to the working class and people as a whole, being the vanguard of the entire working class and all strata of working people, including the youth. The YWLL applies Marxism to the young generation and its struggles and thus plays a leading role among youth.

4. The YWLL strives to unite youth around their basic needs and against monopoly and towards socialism. It fights for democratic youth unity within the youth movement. While concerned with all strata of youth and open to all youth, it places special emphasis on young workers, always striving to enhance their leading role in the youth movement and in the YWLL.

5. It sees itself as a "school of socialism." James Steele, its national chairman,has stated: "The YWLL is a mass school of struggle. And we also declare that this school has an open admissions policy. There must be absolutely no barriers, no criteria of a certain level of ideological or theoretical development for youth who are honest and sincere and want to struggle for a better life for young people." Any honest, sincere youth can join the League,regardless of their knowledge of Marxism-Leninism. Once in the League, they will be provided with the opportunities to learn about struggle, trade unionism, class unity, socialism, etc.

6. The YWLL is conscious of the need and more and more is able to develop activities that take into account the all-round needs of youth - including educational, recreational, cultural, social, as well as social struggle for their economic and political needs.

7. The YWLL has proven in its ten years of existence that it can mobilize and organize youth around the demands embodied in the campaign for "youth's right to earn, learn and live." In particular,

it has concentrated on combatting youth unemployment. The April 14th National Youth Lobby for Jobs, in which the YWLL played a decisive role, was another significant indication of its ability to move youth and youth organizations in unity for the interests of youth.

8. The YWLL has made an historic contribution to the unity of our class and people, not only in its consistent struggles for the full economic, social and political equality of Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Native American Indian and other nationally and racially oppressed youth, but as well by setting an example in its membership and leadership of multi-national and multi-racial youth unity.

9. The Party supports the building of the YWLL for all of the above reasons. Furthermore, we cannot underestimate the indispensable contributions made by the YWLL to Party endeavors such as election campaigns, press drives, etc. Neither can we overlook the high level of commitment and ideological clarity of the youth who join the Party after having been members of the YWLL. Most significantly the Party supports the YWLL because it is impossible to win the young generation to the side of the working class, for peace, democracy and socialism, without a youth organization such as the YWLL, which is Marxist-Leninist-led and creatively applies that science to the problems and concerns of youth.

10. James Steele and Danny Rubin in For a Turn in Party Work in Respect to Youth pose the following problem: "There are still some comrades who feel that all that is needed is Party work among the youth. Some feel a Youth League is not needed." Experience shows that attempts to bypass the Youth League and simply substitute Party work among the youth have negative results, both for the Party and the youth movement. Such approaches lead "to the very opposite of what was intended, with the Party not significantly influencing youth but other tendencies moving in to fill the vacuum. However, an organization which is itself a youth organization and is shaped by the same factors shaping the rest of the generation, yet is based on a Marxist-Leninist working class outlook as applied to the conditions facing youth, can be much more successful." (Steele and Rubin)

In its 1978 policy statement; "Guidelines on How Best to Assist the League," the Political Bureau stated: "We should seek to bring all youth ages 14 through 24 into the League. Youth should be asked to spend a year in the League before being recruited into the Party. The general rule is that all Party members below the age of 25 are to be assigned to be members of the League."

Discussion Question #2: How can your club help in the building of the YWLL? How can the relations between the Party and the YWLL be strengthened? The discussion and the discussion leader in summarizing, should emphasize the following points:

1. The Party and its clubs can help build the League by consistently supporting and raising the demands which youth are concerned with. This can be done in the trade unions, neighborhood organizations, Daily World and other forums, etc. Youth unemployment, the sub-minimum wage for youth, the attacks on public education and higher education, registration and the threat of the draft and racism

connected with these questions, are issues of direct interest to youth, but which require support from other sections of the anti-monopoly forces.

2. Concrete support to specific actions which the YWLL is involved in either nationally or locally. For example: work to get trade union support, for different youth activities in the form of endorsement of actions, resolutions of support, financial aid, the sending of delegates for actions such as youth jobs, lobbies, etc.

3. Where there is a local YWLL branch in the club's area of responsibility, it is helpful to establish and maintain harmonious and comradely relations with the YWLL branch, its members and leadership. Exchange information and opinions on developments in the area and try to coordinate activities as much as possible. All this should be done keeping in mind not to undermine in any way the independence of the YWLL. The scheduling of regular discussions between YWLL representatives and club representatives has been proven to be very helpful; such regular contacts are much better, lead to better work and strengthening relations as opposed to meeting only or mainly on an emergency or crisis basis when there are acute problems of mobilization for activities, etc. Where there is more than one Party club in a YWLL branch's area, there is a need to work out cooperation with the other club(s) in seeking to assist the branch.

4. The club should explore areas where it could be of particular help to the YWLL, such as in helping with ideological work (study groups, classes, etc.), acquiring literature and films for educational activities, helping to secure centers for social activities, helping with transportation and so on. Such aid should be based on prior consultation and agreement from the League.

5. The club should promote the League and its activities among youth with which it is in contact. The League is currently in a membership drive (April-1-June 30). You should not only turn over contacts, but enroll members, taking the 25¢ fee and turning over the money, name, address and phone number to the League.

6. Often club members with certain abilities and talents can be of help to the League in establishing musical groups, photography classes, chess clubs, art workshops, dance classes, athletic teams and other activities specially appealing to youth.

7. <u>In this period, helping the League in building towards a successful 5th National Convention is key. This should be seen as a period in which the local League can be strengthened, or if there is no League in the area this can be an excellent opportunity for helping to establish one.</u> Clubs should aid in the organizing of local delegations to attend the National Convention by putting youth contacts in touch with the League, organizing forums and other activities where the excitement of a League National Convention and its goals and significance, can be projected to other youth. The club can help in giving leads to the YWLL for funds, or raising money directly in the absence of a League to send youth to the convention. (Often there are progressive-minded people who would not give to the Party or the <u>Daily World</u>, <u>Voz</u> or <u>People's World</u>, who would give to the YWLL or youth

activity in general). In areas where there is no League branch, plans should be made to follow up the National Convention with a report-back meeting or social, with the aim of establishing an ongoing branch.

8. The Political Bureau in its 1978 policy statement also made the following points: "As members of the League (that is, Party members who are also League members), their main political assignments are to come from the League. They should be given no substantial or long term Party assignments without consultation with the League Section leadership. As League members who are also Party members they are expected to set a good example by accepting and carrying out substantial inner League and mass activity assignments and therefore will be unable to carry such a double load. League members who are Party members should not be placed on Party bodies, including club execs, without consultation with the League Section leadership. A League member may be placed on a club exec if there is no additional responsibility of being on the exec and the purpose is to reflect youth work in the exec...League Section leadership is to be consulted even with regard to changes affecting League branch leadership, because each Party club has no way of assessing the cumulative impact of assignment changes by a number of Party clubs on the League Section and its work....Club political discussions seek to coordinate the efforts of the Party among adults and the League among youth, in common struggles and activities and avoid any tendency to discuss like a super-exec of the League branch. Periodically the Party club should discuss in general how the League branch is doing overall and what it can do to help. While influencing the League ideologically and politically and seeking a common position with it on local issues, the club should not seek to change League branch policy with regard to section or national youth developments and policies. Any questions of this kind should go through the district or national Party leadership to the corresponding League leadership....Party members who are also League members are expected to set an example in the League for dues payment, sustaining and fund drive pledge fulfillment. In order to avoid a double burden on these comrades, they are excused from Party sustainer pledges and fund drive pledges. Their Party dues rate is to be the minimum monthly amount. The Party club financial secretary, however, is to check with each member who is a League member as to whether they are paying their League dues, sustainer and fund drive pledge at the same time they check on other Party members with regard to Party dues, sustainer and fund drive."

9. The club should consider, especially where there is no League, assigning one or more members who are either youth, still close to youth in age, or who have close contact with youth, to help strengthen or establish the League. Our and world experience is that the actual bodies of youth organizations, including the League, are not themselves youth, being a little older and more settled in life.

10. The club and its leadership should see to it that all members are acquainted with the activities of the League, its policies, etc. The Young Worker and other League materials should be made available to club members. 5th National Convention materials should be made available to members and their friends and contacts.

Recommended Reading:

Danny Rubin and James Steele -- "For a Turn in Party Work With Respect to Youth" — Party Organizer, Vol. XIV, No. 1

Hall, Gus -- Labor Up-Front -- pp. 66-70

The Struggle Ahead -- Main Political Resolution, 22nd National Convention CPUSA, pp. 27-28

Johnson, Ron -- "New Challenges Confronting Afro-American Youth" -- Political Affairs, Feb. 1981

Rodriguez, Pedro -- "Youth, the Economy and the '80s" -- Political Affairs, Nov. 1980

Spector, Daniel -- "New Aspects of the Youth Question" -- Political Affairs, Jan. 1981

Rosenberg, Daniel -- "Youth and the Party of the Future" -- Political Affairs, Aug.-Sept. 1979

Lenin, V.I. -- "The Youth International" -- Collected Works, Vol. 23, p. 163 or Lenin On Youth, pp. 27-31

Lenin, V.I. -- "The Tasks of the Youth League" -- Collected Works, Vol. 31, p. 283, or in Lenin On Youth, pp. 21-42